



# Fact Sheet

## WHAT IS VERMONT ABLE?

In 2014, Congress passed the Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (the “ABLE Act”). The Act allows states to set up 529-like accounts for individuals with disabilities.

Prior to the ABLE Act, individuals with disabilities who received any type of means-tested benefits, such as SSI or Medicaid, could not have more than \$2,000 in savings. These so-called “asset limits” forced many individuals to live in poverty, preventing them from working, saving money, owning homes, and planning for their futures.

ABLE Accounts change all of that. With an ABLE Account, individuals can save much more than \$2,000, without risking the loss of critical benefits.

Vermont ABLE is offered through a partnership with Ohio’s ABLE program, STABLE Accounts. The partnership is free to Vermont, and allows Vermonters access to the first, and the largest, ABLE program in the country, at reduced annual fees.

## ELIGIBILITY

- 1 Must be a Vermont resident
- 2 Developed blindness or qualifying disability before age 26
- 3 Disability will last for at least one year

## QUALIFIED EXPENSES

Under the proposed federal ABLE regulations, account holders can use their STABLE Accounts for a wide variety of expenses, including (but not limited to):



Health



Education



Housing



Transportation



Legal Fees



Financial  
Management



Assistive  
Technology &  
Personal Support  
Services



Employment  
Training &  
Support



Oversight  
Monitoring



Basic Living  
Expenses



Funeral  
& Burial

## ACCOUNT BASICS

- STABLE Accounts are investment accounts, not bank accounts. They are similar to 529 college savings accounts or 401k accounts, but they offer the transactional capabilities of a checking account and the benefits protections of a Special Needs Trust.
- STABLE offers five investment options for account holders:
  - 4 Vanguard Target Risk Mutual Funds (the “LifeStrategy” Funds)
  - 1 FDIC-insured portfolio, offered by Fifth Third Bank
- There is a monthly account maintenance fee of \$5.00/month (\$60.00/year). Vermonters will also pay a small asset-based fee of between 0.19% and .34%, depending on the investment options they choose.
- The maximum *yearly* contribution limit is currently \$14,000.
- The maximum *lifetime* contribution limit is currently \$426,000.
- All STABLE Account holders can request a loadable, pre-paid debit card to use with their account. The card features its own online expense tracking portal, allowing users to write notes and categorize their expenses for easy record-keeping.
- Account enrollment is online and free. Vermonters can open an account on [www.vermontable.com](http://www.vermontable.com) (expected launch February 2017). Accounts can be managed online.
- The minimum deposit required to open an account is just \$50.00.
- Earnings grow free of federal income tax.
- Online gifting platform allows friends, family, and employers to make gifts directly into an individual’s STABLE Account.
- Can contribute via check or by electronic funds transfer from an existing bank account.
- Free, unlimited withdrawals (including bill-pay capability).
- Dedicated customer service available 9A-6P, M-F.